



## Weekend away

A COUPLE OF NIGHTS IN A CORNISH PUB,  
IMMERSED IN VILLAGE LIFE, PROVIDES ALL THE  
NECESSARY COMFORTS FOR A WINTER BREAK

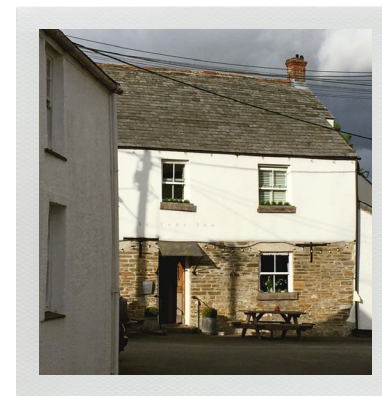
Words & photography: **CLARE GOGERTY**

There are certain things that are essential on a winter break. As late afternoons and evenings are most likely spent indoors, a place to stay that offers a crackling fire and a snug bar is one. So is a tasty menu – as the night draws in, you don't want to put a foot outside (unless to stargaze). Deeply comfortable beds and a mountain of pillows are another. Happily, the St Tudy Inn, near Bodmin in Cornwall, delivers all these winter-hunkering necessities. The pub with rooms is also a short drive from the sandy beaches and rocky coves of North Cornwall. Wonderfully unpopulated at this time of year, they're just right for blustery walks that make your cheeks tingle, and fill your lungs with gasps of good, clean air. The nearby towns of Padstow and Port Isaac are quieter now, too, and have many potential eating options, including fish suppers and fat pasties.



### Where we stayed

The St Tudy Inn is run by Emily Scott who took over what was the village pub in 2014 and turned it into one of the top 50 gastropubs in the UK. The food she serves has been the driver behind her success but last year she boosted the offering by converting a derelict barn into comfy accommodation. Our room (one of four) looked out over the church and was furnished in a light, informal style that felt like home, only less grubby and with more devices (USB plug sockets and a Nespresso machine). The pub itself has a roomy restaurant and a cosy bar selling food, ale and with a carefully chosen wine list (Emily's husband has a vineyard in France). You're wonderfully tucked away in the country here, but the sea is still in easy motoring distance.





## What we ate

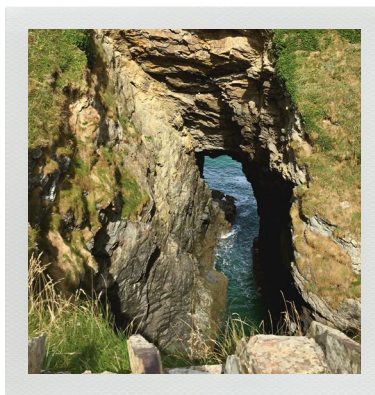
Before she took on The St Tudy Inn, Emily Scott ran The Harbour Restaurant in nearby Port Isaac, which she sold to Nathan Outlaw. As you would hope, her food is steered by what is available locally and seasonally, but is presented in ever-evolving and delicious combinations. Our favourite meals were Newlyn crab topped with a slice of Welsh Rarebit and micro herbs (pictured), a fresh and lovely broad bean and baby artichoke salad, and a smoked haddock chowder, which we ate in the restaurant. Pollock goujons with chips, chosen from the equally good bar menu, were a welcome feast after a bracing walk. Breakfast was hearty but not over-loaded and included home-cured bacon and St Tudy sausage.



## What we did

Post-breakfast, we bowled along lanes towards the coast, stopping off at places that looked appealing. First was the Porteath Bee Centre, where we bought a pot of honey and a tub of beeswax. Further along the road was the St Kew Farm Shop & Café, where we refuelled with coffee and brownies and browsed homeware, magazines, cushions and ceramics. The North Cornwall coastline, most of which is owned by the National

Trust, is big on headlands, steep paths and rocky coves. We parked up near Lundy Bay and descended a wooded path, down to the sea and a patch of sand big enough to spread out on and eat our picnic. Another walk to Pentire Point and The Rumps – a satisfyingly circular hike around a dramatic headland – was tantalisingly signposted but had to be saved for another day. Instead, we drove on to Rock to catch the ferry to Padstow (a very pleasant way to get there), where we milled about the harbour and the shops with other visitors.

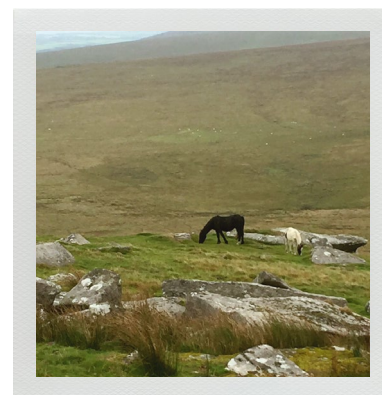


## We also liked

Port Isaac (pictured), once a fishing village, now better known as the setting for *Doc Martin*, was undeniably pretty – the one place we went that was relatively busy! On Bodmin Moor, on the other



hand, the only souls we met were wild ponies and the occasional fell runner. Its windswept and beautiful expanse was punctuated by stone rows, positioned carefully by our prehistoric forebears for unknown, possibly ceremonial reasons, and mighty tors – piles of weathered rock resembling craggy faces. We put our hoods up as the wind whipped past and walked for miles, stopping only for a cream tea served in a ramshackle outhouse by a farmer's wife. It was an exhilarating way to spend a couple of hours.



## The best thing

The St Tudy Inn is at the heart of the village and is its lively centre. Staying there for a couple of days allowed us, temporarily, to indulge the idea that we actually lived there. This conceit grew in the evening as the locals piled into the bar and filled us in on local gossip. Going out to pick up a paper in the morning, it wasn't long before we were on nodding terms with folk in the village shop and dog walkers. It was a wrench to leave – always a sign of a weekend well spent. **S**

*Dinner, bed & breakfast at The St Tudy Inn costs from £105 for two (in January); [sttudyinn.com](http://sttudyinn.com).*